

ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER 2006 AT THE CHURCH ROOMS COLBURY

Present: Councillors S. Arnold (in the Chair), D. Bryant, A. Holdsworth, R. Judd, W. Kewley, P Sopowski.

In Attendance: Parish Clerk L. Griggs, District Councillors L Puttock and D. Tipp, and 24 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and said my first job is to explain about the Christmas Lights and apologise to those residents who stood, accompanied by the Ocean Harmony Mens Barber Shop Chorus Singers, and waited for the switch on. Unfortunately there had been a break down in communication between SEC, the installers, and Christmas Plus, the providers of the new lights, so when switched on they faded to nothing. However, after several telephone calls and emails we now have Christmas lights in the village.

During the storm of Thursday evening a tree came down in Peterscroft Avenue. Apart from the inconvenience and a resident's broken fence there was no further damage. I understand that NFDC acted promptly.

Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ardern due to the death of her mother.

CO-OPTION OF A COUNCILLOR

The Chairman advised that there had been no volunteers for this post so she suggested to colleagues, and with their agreement, that they continue their work with just 7 members and wait until May for the elections. Councillor Bryant proposed and Councillor Kewley seconded that the matter be left until May and it was agreed unanimously.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following points were raised by members of the public.

- i) Application for removal of an oak tree. The Chairman said this would arise under Planning.
- ii) Notice from Test Valley and NFDC re work to be carried out on watercourses. It was important to ensure everyone kept the drainage ditches clear to avoid flooding. The Chairman said it was very important because of the incidence of flooding in the area.
- iii) Re the barrier to be erected over the railway bridge. What sort of barrier would it be and would it blend in with the area. The Chairman asked the Clerk to get details.
- iv) There was a considerable amount of standing water by the Parade. The Clerk was asked to notify Highways.

DISCLOSURE OF AN INTEREST IN AN AGENDA ITEM

The Chairman inquired if there were any items on the agenda that would lead to a Councillor submitting a form C?

There were none.

MINUTES

The minutes of the November meeting having been previously circulated to all Councillors, Councillor Bryant proposed and Councillor Sopowski seconded that they be approved and signed. Following a unanimous agreement the Chairman signed the minutes.

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Mr Bryan Pass, Chairman of the Committee, said that there had been a good attendance at all meetings. Everyone had worked extremely hard and with enthusiasm but he paid special tribute to the work of the two Councillors, Rita Judd and Sue Arden, for their work on the committee. There had been a 30% return of the "Love it/Hate it" survey which was the best of any council taking part in the Community Plan programme. The full questionnaire would be delivered to all residents and businesses in the parish during the last week of January. Delivery was being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Watch team. There was a need for volunteers to collect the completed returns and/or encourage people to complete the questionnaire. A return of 70% was needed to ensure the credibility of the plan. Rita Judd was the liaison officer so volunteers should contact her.

The Chairman thanked Bryan for those comments and said that thanks were due to Bryan as well as the team for their work.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

Councillor Judd said that after the recent heavy rainwater was again pouring out from the drain on the A35 which had caused problems previously. The Chairman said that although HCC had visited the parish with the "Guzzler" to clear blockages, further problems were being identified. The Clerk was asked to contact Highways again regarding the overflowing ditches.

Councillor Sopowski drew everyone's attention to the article in the Newsletter regarding the danger for children crossing the A35 near Colbury Memorial Hall. He asked everyone to support the cause and to encourage their friends and neighbours also to make their voices heard.

Councillor Judd said it was disappointing to find that Alldays had received only nine responses and the Post Office only five. She hoped there would be an improvement in the next few days.

District Councillor Puttock said he had looked into this with HCC and had been advised that whereas traffic going East slowed down as they approached that area, presumably because of the roundabout signs, traffic going West was increasing speed as it left the roundabout and went up Hunters Inn Hill. HCC felt there could be more problems if traffic lights were installed at that point.

Councillor Sopowski said that whereas there was someone manning the crossing in the morning when it was daylight there was no one in the afternoon when it was dark. While he understood the recruitment problem was it possible for support staff at the school to help out on a temporary basis? He also said that places like Totton had both pedestrian lights and a subway. He asked the villagers for their support in pressing for action by HCC.

The Chairman referred to letters in the Newsletter re Foxhills, the School and parking problems. She said she was asked to mention this as a lady was verbally abused on Wednesday whilst driving down Whartons Lane, due to the parking problem. She also mentioned that the School

was offered a field by Barker Mills to ease the parking issue. Have spoken with the Headmaster, Mr. Espezel, about this latest issue, he did say with regard to the field that they were asked to gravel it and then put it back to grassland when the school no longer required it. This they could not afford to do.

The Chairman said she had attended the Wheatshield Open day at the railway site and said her personal view is that the railway cottages have been tastefully restored. She had been informed that 45 residents visited on the Thursday and 15 on the Sunday.

RECREATION GROUND

Councillor Bryant said he had inspected the site on several occasions and dealt with any issues arising. The broken fence had been replaced. He had been unable to get any quotations for clearing the shrubs between the trees. He added that the notice board had now been repaired. The Clerk said he was in touch with NFDC on the ground clearance but was having difficulty finding the right person to speak to actually in his office. Nobody rang back.

PLANNING

Councillor Sopowski gave a report on planning issues since the last meeting. A member of the public asked whether the removal of an oak tree on his property, which it was claimed was causing damage to a neighbouring property, was really necessary. Oak trees were a feature of the village and particularly in Whartons Lane and took up a considerable amount of water which was essential in keeping water levels down. The Chairman read a letter from a resident regarding this tree work application and said we have until 20th December to reply to NFDC. Councillor Bryant, Parish Tree Warden, said he would be asking the Council to oppose the removal and would let the Clerk have his comments after the meeting. He added that an application for the removal of hedgerows to facilitate the laying of a gas pipe line affected 17 hedges in our parish. None were of special merit and as they would be replaced after the pipe work was completed he would be recommending acceptance of the application.

Councillor Holdsworth said she hoped the replacement would be neat and tidy unlike the Gas Boards reinstatement of road side verges after their work in the village.

LENGHTSMAN

Nothing to report.

ACCOUNTS

The list of cheques issued since the last meeting was approved.

It was agreed that any proceeds from a collection at the "Carols in the Dark" would go this year to Age Concern.

The Chairman said she was happy to provide the food for the refreshments after the meeting but would appreciate it if the Council would agree to pay for the wine. The Councillors agreed unanimously.

GRANTS

None received. The Chairman advised that following a query raised by Councillors at the last meeting she could confirm that the Caudwell Children's Charity was a properly registered charity.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor Holdsworth announced that she was looking for premises in Blackfield to house another foot clinic. Age Concern was currently running 18 to 20 foot clinics each month. She had also attended the lunch for volunteers which was also attended by the local MP Julian Lewis. The volunteers did a great work and this was an opportunity to show appreciation.

Councillor Bryant had attended the Wheatshield open day and also the funeral of Mrs Penny, wife of former Councillor Penny.

Councillor Judd attended the Management Committee meeting of the New Forest North CAB on 4th December and the Community Plan group on 5th December. Totton CAB has purchased new office equipment and is raising money to refurbish the waiting rooms. Their Customer Satisfaction Survey is continuing and results are expected shortly. They also have a new volunteer for Social Policy Work. A new Manager has been appointed at New Milton.

District Councillor Puttock said a notice had been issued by NFDC regarding waste collections over the Christmas holiday period. He added that while recycling in NF was good it needed to increase by some 8% to achieve the targets set by Government and the EU. Reaching those targets would help to continue with waste collection by sacks. One recycling centre had increased recycling from 20% to 68% by having operatives who helped people by identifying recyclable materials being put into waste bins.

District Councillor Tipp mentioned the "Future Matters" consultation document issued by NPA and invited everyone to look at the questionnaire and be involved by answering as many questions as possible then returning it to NPA. This was an opportunity for everyone to get involved in the future of the New Forest area. The Chairman added "I have briefly looked at it and feel that it should be answered. It does have 223 questions but as a Parish I don't think we can afford not to make some comment". It was agreed that Councillors should look at the document then meet up to discuss and respond.

Councillor Arnold said she had attended the following meetings:

29th November with Peter Frost to discuss ways to improve our newsletter and on

4th December a meeting of Heads of Department and NFALC

CORRESPONDENCE

All Councillors had a list of the major correspondence received which was available at the meeting.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.29pm and invited all present to partake of the refreshments available.

Signed S R Arnold Chairman

Dated 9th January 2007